

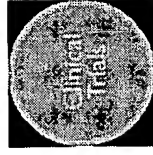
APPENDIX M



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Breast cancer stages

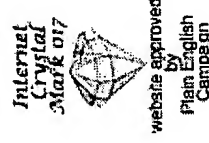
This page tells you about the stages of breast cancer. You can scroll down the page to read all the information here. Or you can use these links to go straight down to sections on

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About staging

Doctors divide breast cancer into four stages. Knowing the stage helps them decide the best treatment or combinations of treatments for you.

There are many different words and phrases used to describe breast cancer staging. The first 3 stages of breast cancer are also called primary breast cancer or early stage breast cancer. This means the cancer has not spread to another part of the body (apart from the lymph nodes under the arm). [Stage 4](#) is also called secondary breast cancer.

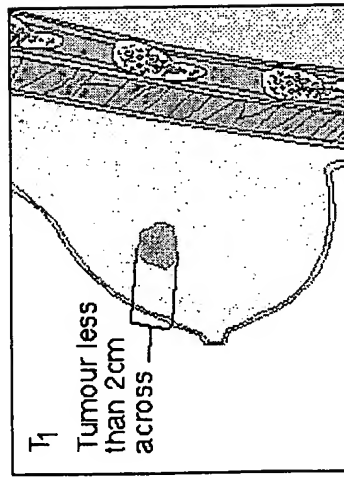


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Effective treatment makes it less likely the cancer will go on to another stage. Many breast cancers never go beyond stage one or two. The aim of treatment is to cure the cancer and for many women with early disease this is possible.

If you would like more information about anything to do with the stages of breast cancer, contact one of the cancer information organisations in Help and Support. They will be happy to help. You can find more details about the 'staging' of breast cancer on the next page of this CancerHelp UK section. And more about staging cancers generally in our About Cancer section.

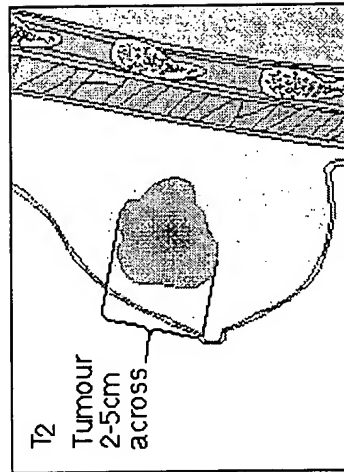
Stage 1



- The tumour is no more than 2 centimetres across (T1)
- The lymph nodes in the armpit are not affected
- The cancer has not spread

'Tumour' here means either a breast lump or the area of cancer cells found on your scan or mammogram.

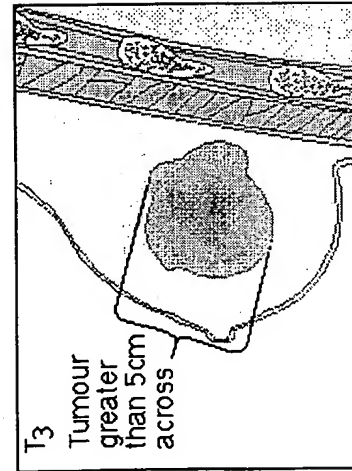
Stage 2



- The tumour is more than 2 centimetres, but less than 5 centimetres across (T2)
- Or the lymph nodes in the armpit are affected, or both
- The cancer has not spread anywhere else

'Tumour' here means either a breast lump or the area of cancer cells found on your scan or mammogram.

Stage 3



- The tumour is more than 5 centimetres across (T3)

- The lymph nodes in the armpit are affected
- There is no further spread

'Tumour' here means either a breast lump or the area of cancer cells found on your scan or mammogram.

Stage 4

- The tumour can be any size
- The lymph nodes in the armpit are often affected
- The cancer has spread or metastasised to other parts of the body (for example, lymph nodes above the collar bone or distant organs such as the lungs, liver or bones)

If you only have cancer spread to the lymph nodes under your arm, you do **not** have stage 4 breast cancer. Stage 4 only applies to cancer spread to other body organs or to other lymph nodes, apart from those in the armpit. Stage 4 breast cancer is also called secondary breast cancer or 'metastatic breast cancer'. Or your specialist may say your cancer 'has metastasised'.

Locally advanced breast cancer

You may hear the term 'locally advanced' breast cancer. As defined by NICE, this means the cancer has not spread to another part of the body, but

- The cancer in the breast is bigger than 5 centimetres across
- The cancer has grown into the skin or muscle of the chest
- There is cancer in the lymph nodes under the arm

Locally advanced breast cancer can be any or all of these. So it could mean either stage 2 or stage 3 breast cancer.

